



MERCER COUNTY FY2016 HISTORY REGRANT PROGRAM GRANT PACKET (Applications & Guidelines)

Mercer County Cultural & Heritage Commission
Invites *General Operating Support* and *Special Projects* Grant Proposals for
Fiscal Year 2016:
September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016

County of Mercer
The Honorable Brian M. Hughes, *County Executive*

Board of Chosen Freeholders

Samuel T. Frisby, chair
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Office of Economic Development & Sustainability
Elizabeth Maher Muoio, *Director*

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(609) 278-2712 fax (609) 278-6672

Applications must be postmarked or hand-delivered **by noon, Tuesday, June 30, 2015**
to: *History Regrant Program*, Mercer County Cultural & Heritage Commission,
640 South Broad Street, Trenton, NJ 08650

*Mercer County Cultural & Heritage Commission received an operating support grant
from the New Jersey Historical Commission,
a division of the NJ Department of State.*



MERCER COUNTY HISTORY REGRANT PROGRAM

FY16 GUIDELINES

We are pleased to offer this State/County History Regrant Partnership between The New Jersey Historical Commission/ Department of State, and the County of Mercer. The NJ Historical Commission, the Mercer County Executive, and the Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholders are making funds available to support historic sites, societies, organizations and history programming in Mercer County.

The following pages explain the goals and application process involved in applying for a Mercer County History Regrant. The application is available as a Microsoft Word document that can be emailed to you. Do not email your completed application. Only hard copies of the completed application packet will be accepted.

APPLICATION CALENDAR

May, 2015	Guidelines available
June 30, 2015	<i>Application Deadline</i> (postmarked or in-person delivery by noon)
July/August, 2015	Panel Review
September, 2015	MCC&HCommission Review
Oct/Nov, 2015	Freeholder Approval
Nov/Dec, 2015	Notification/Contracts Released

The Program Year for this grant cycle is September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016. Please note that there is a 6 – 8 week gap between the start of the grant year (beginning September 1) and official notification of grant awards. Please plan accordingly. *If all of your FY16 programming will take place prior to notification (in October) please call the MCC&H History Program Coordinator, Tricia Fagan, 609-989-6418 to discuss options before completing and submitting an application.*

INTRODUCTION

The Mercer County Executive and Board of Chosen Freeholders, through the county's Cultural and Heritage Commission, offers both General Operating Support (GOS) and Special Projects (SP) grants to Mercer County organizations that demonstrate professionalism, commitment and excellence in producing or programming history-related projects, events or programs. The grants are administered by the County's Division of Culture and Heritage. Organizations can submit requests for *either* GOS or Mercer County Cultural & Heritage Commission **History Regrant FY2016**

SP support. The maximum GOS grant request is \$5,000, for SP grants the maximum request is \$2,500. If you receive GOS support from the NJ Historical Commission you may apply for *Special Projects* funding **only** from the Division; if you receive SP support from the NJHCommission, you may apply for either a GOS or SP grant from Mercer County. **However**, you may NOT receive a Special Project grant from both Mercer and the NJHC for the *same project*. You MAY apply for and receive a SP grant from the County and the State Historical Commission for two *different* history projects.

Funds from the **Mercer County History Regrant Program** are available to assist Mercer County-based non-profit organizations (particularly historic sites, historical organizations,) libraries, schools, and local government entities that wish to bring historical programming and information (especially programming with a focus on Mercer County and its communities) to a broad public audience. Grants are evaluated by an independent review panel and are awarded competitively to organizations and projects that demonstrate clear public benefit, responsible management, proven quality of work, and historical merit.

The New Jersey Historical Commission has established priorities that the Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission fully support. Grants addressing these priorities are particularly welcome:

- strengthening existing history programs and operations while initiating new programs
- improving management and interpretation of historic sites and collections
- expanding public understanding and awareness of historic resources
- increasing public and organizational participation in historical programs and activities
- demonstrating efforts to reach out to and include diverse and underserved communities
- increasing public accessibility to history activities, programs and sites

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants:

- ❖ Mercer County-based, non-for-profit history organizations, societies, and sites
- ❖ Other County non-profit organizations that offer programs, services, activities, or materials that relate significantly to the history of Mercer County or any of its municipalities
- ❖ Units of local or Mercer County-based government, including schools and libraries

Grant recipients must demonstrate compliance with all applicable state and federal laws, and maintain good standing with all governmental filing requirements. Grant monies must be used to expand or enhance programs relevant to teaching about or preserving local and County history.

Non-profit applicants must:

- be Mercer County-based
- be incorporated in the State of New Jersey
- have been in existence for at least two (2) years prior to submitting a grant application; and must demonstrate an ability to provide history or related services/programs to the general public
- be approved as a non-profit organization under the Internal Revenue Service's Section 501(c)(3) or Section 501(c)(4) – or have approval pending at the time of application **
- include a copy of the organization's IRS letter of determination along with the grant application

*** non-profits who have applied for, but have not yet received IRS designation may apply through a host organization that has received exempt designation. Please call our offices if you are interested in this option, but uncertain how to proceed.*

Units of local government:

- may apply for Special Project support grants, only
- must demonstrate an ability to provide Mercer County/local history-related programs, services, or activities to the general public
- must describe, in detail, how the proposed Special Project relates to the overall mandate of your program

TYPES OF GRANTS

GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT (GOS)

GOS grants (maximum grant \$5,000) are available to non-profit history organizations only.

Requests cannot exceed 1/3 of the organization's annual operating budget and require a 1:1 cash match. GOS grants provide funding for the basic operating costs of an historical society, historical museum, historic site, or other not-for-profit history organization based in Mercer County. Applicants should describe the full range of their organization's operations, and their grant must demonstrate high standards of history programming and management. Annual budget expenditures may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Staff salaries
- Consultant fees
- Professional development
- Staff, volunteer, and board training
- Fees (for certified signer, eg.) or materials to enable compliance with the ADA of 1990
- Printing, postage, telephone, utilities costs
- Marketing, publicity
- Fundraising and development
- Historic maintenance: collections, interiors, etc.
- HVAC expenses directly related to preservation of historic collections
- Lease and mortgage expenses
- Related equipment purchase, installation or lease
- Insurance and/or audit expenses

SPECIAL PROJECTS GRANTS (SP)

Special Project (SP) grants are available to both history and non-history non-profits and government units. These funds provide support for specific history programs or projects related to the history Mercer County or its municipalities. SP grants may not be used for general administrative salaries. Examples of eligible activities are listed below. If you do not see an example (below) related to your proposal, contact the History Program Coordinator to discuss your project **before** completing this application packet to determine if your project is eligible for these funds. The maximum request for an SP grant is \$2,500. Eligible SP projects include:

- Public historic/heritage programs including exhibitions, lectures, performances, demonstrations, workshops, conferences, tours

- Educational projects which focus on Mercer County or local history
- Research, writing, and publication projects with public benefit, including descriptive historic brochures
- Technical assistance projects identifying/addressing a specific organizational need (such as long-range planning, fund-raising, marketing) that will facilitate a planned historic project
- Conservation and preservation of historic materials
- Oral history projects that will include transcriptions
- Media and digital historic projects, and microfilming
- Research related to historic preservation projects
- Work necessary to nominate a site for State or National Registers of Historic Places
- Genealogical projects resulting in research tools that have *use to the wider historical community*
- ADA assistive services for historical programming, including sign or audio interpretation, rental of listening devices, publication of large print programs, etc.

Additional eligible expenses directly related to the Special Project may include:

- Wages/honorariums for SP personnel
- Honoraria/expense for lecturers
- Oral history tape transcription fees
- Archival or research library user fees
- Archival products including folder, boxes, etc., for the storage of historical materials
- Exhibition loan fees and related shipping costs
- Costs for fabricating and installing exhibitions
- Project supply costs
- Printing, photocopying, postage, etc. related to special project
- Photography
- Production of promotional materials
- Equipment rental (under \$750; rental costs in excess of this amount require special approval)

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Funding from this program may not be used for:

- Acquisitions of any sort, including artifacts and collections

- Capital improvements to grounds and building exteriors or removal/addition of interior walls
- Deficits; Endowments; Scholarships/prizes
- Restoration or preservation of structures
- Projects in religious or ethnic institutions that do not actively seek a wide public and general audience
- Refreshments/hospitality at meetings, lectures, seminars, etc.

MATCH REQUIREMENTS

All Mercer County History Grants require a **cash** match from the applying organization. **GOS (General Operating Support)** grants require a full cash match (1:1) from the applicant; no in-kind match is applicable for this award. GOS grants may be awarded for up to 1/3 of an organization's annual budget (maximum of \$5,000). The cash match can come from any source except for funds from any division/department or other funding entity of the State of New Jersey.

The full amount of **SP (Special Project)** grants must be matched by the organization, but the required cash match only needs to be *50% of the amount of the total grant requested*. The other 50% of the grant can be matched by *either cash or documented in-kind donations* (goods or services that would have otherwise been purchased by the organization.)

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

On-site evaluation: During the grant year, grantees *must furnish a ticket* to the Division for all grant-supported activities requiring tickets (if the project is a *series*, only one ticket must be provided). Publicity announcements for all grant-funded programs must also be forwarded to the Division in the Final Report. Efforts will be made for a member of the Regrant Committee or Division staff to do an on-site review of funded programs.

Technical Assistance Workshops: Grantees are asked to attend at least one technical assistance workshop offered by the Division of Cultural & Heritage or the NJ Historical Commission, annually.

Credit Line: Projects receiving funding must include the following credit line in print and publicity materials: **This program is made possible, in part, by a grant from the Mercer County**

Division of Culture and Heritage, in partnership with the New Jersey Historical Commission, Division of Cultural Affairs/ Department of State.

Cooperative Marketing: Information on all funded activities must be sent to the Division (for inclusion in its calendar of events and website) as soon as program dates are firm. Ideally, publicity information will be sent to the Division at least 3 months in advance of the event's date.

SUPPORT MATERIAL

Applicants are encouraged to include materials that demonstrate the organization's success in presenting programs similar to the project described in their grant proposal. In addition, support materials that display programming and administrative capability (including resumes, program brochures, press clippings, etc.) may also be included. Support materials should be no more than two years old. If older materials are being attached, a brief explanation discussing what has happened in the interim should be included.

REVIEW PROCESS

Grants will be reviewed by an independent Grant Review Panel made up of professionals in the field of history, academics, non-profit management and related fields. They will rank proposals against the grant criteria; and will meet to discuss each grant and assign final rankings with funding recommendations. [Please note: Incomplete applications cannot be forwarded to the Review Panel. As a courtesy to applicants, organizations whose applications are received before June 12, 2015, will be reviewed by the office for completeness and groups will be notified of any issues. Grants received after this date will not be pre-vetted.]

The Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commissioners review all grants and comments from the Grant Panel, and recommend funding levels. Following a Mercer County administrative review, final grant recommendations are submitted to be approved by the County's Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Applicants are notified of their standing in the fall. Organizations receiving funding are required to

prepare any necessary budget and programming revisions that must be submitted along with signed contracts by the end of November. The FY16 History Re-grants covers program activities that take place between September 1, 2015 and August 31, 2016.

GRANT PAYMENTS & REPORTING

Grant funds will be distributed in two payments. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the grant will be paid once the contract is signed. A brief update on activities is due by **March 21, 2016**. (NOTE: This is only an emailed update on the project funded and use of grant funds up to that time.) A complete Final Report form must be submitted to the Division by **June 27, 2016**. (Groups with a current History Re-grant who want to apply for the next year's Re-grant must submit a Final Report by **June 10, 2016**, to be eligible for FY2017 grant submission.) This report must illustrate the successful completion of the funded project and complete documentation for all expenses (receipts, cancelled checks) must be included. The final payment of twenty-five percent (25%) will be made upon receipt and review of a satisfactory final report.

Documentation of all expenditures and all in-kind contributions must be maintained. Remember to keep receipts and cancelled checks for all your expenditures. Volunteer hours should be logged in, an approximate value for any donated goods and services should be included. Even if the combined total from an organization's matching funds and its in-kind donations is *more* than that required by the grant, it is important to note all these resources in the final report.

APPEALS PROCESS

If an applicant can demonstrate that an application has been clearly misinterpreted or misunderstood during the evaluation process, an appeal to the History Re-grant Program may be made. Appeals may only be made on the basis of the information and materials included in the grant application. No additional information or support materials will be considered. The amount of an award will not be considered as grounds for an appeal. Any applicant requiring further clarification of this process may contact the History Program Coordinator in the Division of Culture and Heritage.

PREPARING THE APPLICATION PACKET

Submit one original copy of your grant application, signed with blue ink, plus 5 copies. It is recommended that you use a two-pocket folder, labeled on the outside upper-right-hand corner with your organization's name, for at least the original copy. Clearly mark which folder contains the original application. The grant application form should be in the right-hand pocket of the folder. Support material may be placed in the left hand pocket of the folder. Please do not place applications in binders of any sort.

DEADLINES

Guidelines Available

May, 2015

Application **Review** Submission Deadline

June 12, 2015

Grant Submission Deadline

noon, June 30, 2015

Independent Peer Panel Review

July-August, 2015

Cultural & Heritage Commission Review

September, 2015

Administrative Review/Freeholder Approval

October/November, 2015

Awards Announcements/Contracts Mailed

November/December, 2015

Interim Reports due

March 21, 2016

Final Reports due

June 27, 2016 (June 10, 2016 for those applying for FY17 funds)

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please note that due to the nature of the granting cycle, there is a gap between the beginning of the funding year and when the official grant notification is made. In addition, all grant funding is dependent on funding levels approved by the State for the NJ Historical Commission – and funding levels approved by the NJ Historical Commission for Mercer County Division of Culture & Heritage. Please plan your organization's programming and expenditures carefully, and avoid initiating any grant-reliant projects until you have received official notification and contracts.

Narrative Guideline

Remember: Your **narrative** is the heart of your application. It tells the *story* of your organization and the project you are proposing. Write as if the reader knew nothing about your group or the topic you'll be addressing – but also, it's important to be succinct. Narratives for GOS grants are limited to six (6) pages and for SP grants are limited to five (5) pages. Set up your document with line-spacing at no less than 1 1/2 lines, 1" margins, and 12 point font. Follow the outlines below and use the section headings provided in **bold type**. Do not repeat the questions in your narrative. They are provided only to help you frame your narrative.

General Operating Support Narrative

1. **Mission, Goals, Vision.** Describe your organization's stated mission, its goals and objectives. When were they adopted? How are they related to Mercer County history? How do they relate to the priorities identified by the Commission? What is your organization's vision for the next 3-5 years? How does that fit with your mission and goals? [Organizations not wholly related to regional history must identify what portion of your program is dedicated to local/Mercer County history. Describe all points below for that part of your organization's mission.]

2. **Management/Governance.** How is your organization managed and governed? Is there a staff? What is the role of the board and staff, and what is their relationship with each other? What is your committee structure? Describe board process: how often they meet, how they are nominated, length of terms, expectations of board members. If there is no board, how are you governed? [Be sure to include a list of board members and resumes for staff and/or primary volunteers with your supplemental materials.]

3. **Programs and Services.** Describe the key programs and services of your organization. Include collections, public programming, exhibitions, publications, and educational outreach. Describe how your programs serve the interpretation of local history or how they help audiences to experience that history in a new way. Reviewers will be looking for programs with solid historical content. Describe any innovative programming directions; include any efforts at cultural diversity, collaborations with other organizations, creative partnering of historical content with other disciplines. If you have collections, describe their management and care. Describe how your program is evaluated.

4. **Audience.** Describe the size and composition of your audience for your programs. Include age and other defining characteristics, including total numbers of children served. Is your audience more local or do you attract regionally or statewide? Does your audience match the demographics of the region? What is your current marketing strategy? What efforts are you making to attract new and diverse audiences? Is part of your audience 'virtual' (served via email, website, distance learning, mailed materials, etc.)? If yes, please describe. How does your audience (live or virtual) benefit from your programs?

5. **Fundraising.** How do you raise the money to support your current operations? Briefly discuss all fundraising activities. Reviewers will look for evidence of active, diverse fundraising efforts. If there are none, please explain why.

6. **Finances.** What is the current financial condition of your organization? Please explain any deficits or surpluses represented on your budget forms, and how they are being handled. Is the organization currently building an endowment or working on any capital plans? Does the organization have loans or lines of credit? If yes, for what purpose?

7. **Problems and Opportunities.** Briefly describe recent or anticipated changes in staff, finances, facilities, management, or governance. How will the organization deal with them? If none are expected, say so.

8. **Use of Support Funds.** Describe how funds will be used for the next year and how this will help improve the organization's services and management.

Special Projects Narrative

Groups applying for a Special Projects grant do not need to provide as much detail about their organization as those applying for a GOS grant, but you must provide a general description of the mission and programs of your organization, its governance and organizational structure, backgrounds for its staff and board leadership, and its fiscal and administrative health.

In addition, be sure to include specifics on the proposed project, including the following:

- 1) **Describe your project, its purpose; what will it produce?** how does it fit the basic **eligibility** criteria for Mercer County History regrants?
- 2) Describe how it relates to the mission of your organization and how it will complement other historical activities of the organization.
- 3) Provide information to necessary to demonstrate your clear understanding of the history of the chosen topic, and *make the case for its relationship* to local, Mercer County, or New Jersey history.
- 4) **Detail how the project will be carried out.** Include a schedule or projected timeline for the project's activities.
- 5) Give the **qualifications** of the individuals who will be responsible for the project. Identify skills, experience, or educational background related to the proposed project. We strongly suggest that you attach resumes (no more than three pages per person) of any key (to the project) personnel in your support materials.
- 6) Explain how the Mercer County and larger New Jersey **public benefits** from this project. Describe the anticipated audience and your outreach strategies. Summarize the promotion/marketing plan for the project.
- 7) Explain how the project will be evaluated. How will you determine its success?
- 8) Finance: Explain exactly how the grant funds will be used. Describe the cost of the project and describe the revenue source(s) that you have itemized on the budget form. *Be certain that your description demonstrates that the funds are being used for ELIGIBLE activities.*

EXAMPLE: If you are holding a symposium on a local historical figure, and are ending the event with a reception and announcement of scholarship awards, DO show the funds being used to pay honorarium to key speakers or to develop literature for the event. DO NOT show the funds being used for reception costs or scholarship funds – neither are eligible expenses for the grant (see page 4.)

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING YOUR NARRATIVE

The narrative statement is the key, story-telling element of your application. Written well, it will clearly communicate the goals and plans of your organization, project or initiative to the grant reviewers. It can help present the professionalism and credibility of your planning process, and can help get across the public impact and community benefit the program(s) you wish to present.

1. Follow directions. Read through the entire Guidelines and Application packet before beginning your grant. As you develop your narrative, continue to refer back to the eligibility criteria to make certain that the grant falls within guidelines.
2. Identify specific planning goals. Discuss, in clearly written sentences, the goals and priorities of your project. Be sure to describe the evaluation criteria that will be used to measure the success of the project.
3. Be specific and include details. Do not assume that the reader knows anything about your organization. Describe your proposed project, any topic that you hope to address, any partner organization and own group's history fully.
4. Describe outreach and marketing efforts thoroughly. Discuss your marketing plans, and be sure to demonstrate how these efforts will increase accessibility of historical resources and programming to your community. Be sure to talk about any special efforts you plan to use for reaching out to diverse communities of any sort.
5. Be thoughtful and responsive to ADA issues. The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal law that applies to all providers of public programs, regardless of whether you own the site or not. Grant reviewers are aware of special circumstances faced by programmers at historic sites, however applicants are still responsible for working to increase program accessibility in whatever way possible (publications in large type format, assistive hearing devices, videotaping or simulcast of inaccessible portions of sites, etc.). Programming of this sort may be funded through this grant.
6. Label and refer to your support material. If your support materials are well organized, you can easily reference them in your narrative. This helps you further describe important details about your program or organization while staying within the page limits for the grant application.
7. Submit a well-constructed budget. Be certain that all your projected expenses are based on research, not 'guesstimates'. Your budget must accurately reflect the project and numbers that are described in your grant narrative; be sure that the numbers match up. Ideally, income and expenses should match up in a balanced budget. Have someone check your math to make certain the numbers add up correctly. [NOTE: you do *not* have to have a figure on each line of your budget.]
8. Give clear details in your financial narrative. Explain specifically how you arrived at each cost shown on the line items of your budget. If you hope to hire a speaker or a consultant, for example, explain how you arrived at your estimated cost. Briefly describe how you determined costs of printing, postage, supplies, advertising, etc. Be sure to explain your major projected income sources.